



TO: Board of Park Commissioners
FROM: Susanne Friedman, Project Manager
DATE: November 5, 2008
SUBJECT: Golf Master Plan Update

Requested Board Action

We are coming to you regarding the Golf Course Master Plan Update and its process. We are anticipating that many of the recommendations to come out of this process may be included in a possible capital bond for funding the improvements.

Tonight's briefing is informational. We will provide background on the project and request early input from the Board on any particular issues or concerns that should be addressed. We will be coming back for a full briefing on the draft plan, a public hearing and recommendation from the Board on January 22, 2009 and February 12, 2009 respectively.

Staff Recommendations

None at this time

Project Description and Background

For the Golf Course Master Plan Update we are working with Makers, an architectural and planning firm as prime consultant; John Steidel, a golf course architecture sub-consultant; and ERA, an economic feasibility sub-consultant. We are looking at all four municipal golf courses with the following scope to guide the plan update:

- **Improvement of public golf opportunities** - Updating the 1991 Master Plan and conducting architectural evaluations of clubhouse improvement options which will produce schematic improvement plans and cost estimates for each course, including clubhouses, driving ranges and support facilities.
- **Environmental Sustainability** - Evaluating the existing clubhouses, maintenance facilities, driving ranges and cart barns with an eye to better economic and environmental sustainability.
- **Fiscal Viability** - Revising the 2005 Business and Strategic Plan for the City of Seattle Municipal Golf Course System prepared by ERA (2005 economic study) to reflect current development costs and prioritizations of projects and funding options/strategies for possible bond measures.

The Master Plan's top six priorities are:

1. Perimeter trails around each golf course
2. Clubhouse renovations
3. Conversion to electric cart barns
4. Tee-to-green cart paths
5. Possible driving range additions and expansions
6. Maintenance facility renovations

Seattle has four golf courses: Interbay Golf Center, Jefferson Park Golf Course, Jackson Park Golf Course and West Seattle Golf Course. The physical facilities are maintained by Seattle Parks and Recreation and golf services (course reservation, restaurant and banquet services and pro shops, etc.) are managed by Premier Golf Centers, LLC. All four golf courses have pro shops and food concessions that provide varying levels of service and vary dramatically in their banquet facilities, ability to accommodate a variety of groups and tournaments, and in driving range facilities. The current revenue from each course is relatively similar.

The golf program has been self-sustaining over the past several years. In 2006 the City Council adopted Golf Financial Policies (Resolution 30926). Those policies call for golf revenues to be used to support operations and maintenance of the courses, transfer 3.5% of gross revenue to the Park fund to support overhead costs (accounting, planning management, etc.), and the remainder to be set aside for golf capital improvements. Those policies indicate a willingness to consider improvements that could be debt financed if revenues would be available to pay off the debt.

There is concern that without continual major maintenance and improvements to the courses their use will stagnate and become a financial challenge. The annual amount of golf capital reserve set aside from the courses annual revenue is not enough to complete some of the major improvements needed to the clubhouses and other facilities. Major improvements are needed to increase and retain the current market share. This process considers the possibility of debt financing the proposed improvements.

In one sense, the project has been ongoing since the 1991 Master Plan which recommended a multitude of improvements that have not been fully implemented. However, the effort has increased urgency because the facilities, particularly the clubhouses, have deteriorated to the extent that they threaten the courses' ability to attract golfers. The 2005 ERA economic study states that major improvements are needed to retain the current market share. At the same time the attractiveness of the courses themselves and their central location present the opportunity to retain and perhaps increase current use.

The principal work item of this project is the architectural analysis of clubhouse improvements which will examine both repair and rebuild options. The 2005 economic study recommended demolition and replacement of the structures. This question will be explored in greater detail in the Master Plan Update. An advantage of clubhouse reconstruction over rehabilitation is that the new buildings can be relocated so that operations are not interrupted (as much) and so that the surrounding areas can be better master planned to improve circulation, and possible parking and facilities (e.g.: driving range) expansion. Additionally, if the buildings are reconstructed in a new location, the existing buildings can be used during construction without the loss of ongoing revenue streams.

The golf course grounds are in relatively good shape and do not require major changes, except for gaps in some of the cart paths, completing the perimeter trails, having functioning restroom facilities and some irrigation upgrades. There may be some course layout modifications necessary, resulting from possible clubhouse and other facility relocation recommendations.

Being relatively recently completed, the 2005 economic study will provide a solid platform for the proposed work. New market information and cost figures will be incorporated into the feasibility analysis model and implementation recommendations. However the main purpose of this component of work will be to outline a one lump sum approach to financing the capital costs of improvements with the existing revenue stream, taking into account debt servicing, and proposing a bond package.

Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process includes working directly with the department's Golf Steering Committee, conducting public open houses, and outreach to the general public. The staff and consultant team is working with the Golf Steering Committee to ensure that the interests of the golfing community are met. Because the Committee is composed of advocates for each of the four courses, committee members will provide in-depth course-specific input; at the same time, the Committee will allow members to review and provide input on the emerging proposals as a group, assisting the team in equitably balancing the needs and priorities city wide.

The team will host several open houses, one at each course, to present the draft concepts, options and proposals. It is envisioned that community issues will include safety and security, parking and traffic, appearance of course edges, clubhouse rehabilitation or replacement and joint use of clubhouses. Outreach includes mailers to all zip code routes surrounding each golf course, e-mail notification and distribution through the Department of Neighborhoods Service Centers, District Councils, Parks Community Centers and advisory councils, along with press releases in all the neighborhood publications. The open houses are scheduled for the first week in December, immediately prior to the preparation of draft recommendations. Community members will have the chance to directly provide their comments and preferences at a point in the process that will be most useful to framing the draft plan's direction. Please see the attached project timeline at the end of this paper.

OPEN HOUSES

12/2/08

Interbay Golf Course
6:30-8:00 pm
2501 15th Avenue West

12/3/08

Jackson Park Golf Course
6:30-8:00 pm
1000 NE 135th St

12/4/08

Jefferson Park Golf Course
6:30-8:00 pm
4101 Beacon Ave S

12/6/08

West Seattle Golf Course
10:30-noon
4470 35th Ave SW

Issues

The project is aimed at addressing 6 issues. Below are summarized some background information and the salient aspects of those issues that are common within the Seattle Parks and Recreation golf system.

Perimeter Trails and Public Access - Perimeter trails around the golf courses provide an important amenity for local residents and enhance the courses' importance as public open space. At Jefferson Park and West Seattle, the trails will also help to integrate the courses with adjacent multi-purpose public parklands. Many of the courses already have partial trails around them and this project proposes to complete those trails where possible to increase public access. Existing trails are predominantly crushed rock and the proposed trail improvements will also be crushed rock, or in some places, sidewalks. The trails will be universally accessible except where topography makes this standard infeasible. Pedestrian safety and golf course security will be addressed in this effort.

Club House Renovations - All of the existing clubhouses, except for the one at Interbay, have serious structural, mechanical and electrical deficiencies. Clubhouses at Jackson Park and Jefferson Park are not large enough to meet the requirements of the architectural program (the list of space and functional needs for a typical clubhouse). The West Seattle Golf Course is poorly configured for internal circulation and does not take advantage of the views.

Through research of other facilities nation-wide and discussions with clubhouse managers, the team has developed a prototypical architectural program for Seattle's golf course clubhouses and will use that as a basis for analyzing building rehabilitation and replacement scenarios for each site. These scenarios will also examine site planning issues near the clubhouses such as convenient universal access, relation to the courses themselves, range and putting green, restroom access from the courses, etc. The prototypical clubhouse model allows for a variety of community uses. Non-golfer and community use of the cafes and banquet rooms is considered a positive opportunity. Please see the attachment at the end of this document which outlines a generic clubhouse program.

Tee to Green Cartways and Mid-course Restrooms - Golf carts have become ubiquitous on all courses except for Interbay. Most of the system's cartways are gravel, which is subject to rutting and erosion, especially on slopes. This decreases golfer comfort, increases course maintenance tasks and shortens golf cart life. The master plan will examine the requirements for paving all existing cartways with asphalt pavement. Mid-course restroom conditions will also be examined and improvements recommended where appropriate.

Cart Barns - A Seattle golf course is typically served by 75 golf carts. For efficiency and environmental reasons, Parks and Recreation would like to change from gas powered carts to electric carts, but this will require cart barns with appropriate electrical service. Storage for the carts is problematic at all courses and the team will explore options for more efficient locations. Ideally, cart storage would be under the clubhouse or in a near by but unobtrusive location.

Driving Ranges - Driving ranges are a highly desirable, popular and revenue-generating part of a golf course complex. Improvements to all existing ranges and opportunities for new ranges at Jackson and West Seattle will be explored. Lighting, and ball trespass from driving ranges can

impact neighboring areas and a number of improvements may be warranted to reduce potential impacts.

Maintenance Facilities - The condition and efficiency of maintenance facilities vary from course to course. In most cases, maintenance staff members have specific suggestions for improving maintenance shops and storage areas. The team will work with those suggestions to prepare course specific recommendations for maintenance facilities and grounds.

Other – Parking - As a general protocol, the team will not be exploring options that increase parking pavement. The emphasis will be on alternate modes of transportation such as car pooling. However, in some cases, the remote location of a course may necessitate consideration of additional parking spaces. Generally, if there is a “shotgun” tournament in which all contestants start at a tee at the same time, and the driving range is open, 175 to 200 stalls are desirable. (During mid-day both golfers in the morning tournament and the afternoon tournament will be at the course.)

Environmental Sustainability

Identifying sustainable measures is a major component of this Master Plan. The plan will analyze sustainable building options, the use of photovoltaic and solar systems, development of electric cart barns, water reuse and efficiencies from roof runoff and irrigation systems, multi use clubhouses, pedestrian circulation routes and parking alternatives, along with economic sustainability.

The Golf Program and Premier Golf have undertaken substantial environmental improvement activities over the past 5 years including water quality monitoring, tree planting and wildlife habitat enhancement. This, along with green building analysis of the clubhouses and advanced irrigation techniques should largely answer most of the sustainability issues.

Budget

- The current planning effort will cost roughly \$250,000 - \$300,000, funded from the golf capital budget.
- The Master Plan will provide project recommendations for a possible capital bond measure for funding the improvements. The total cost of the full package has not yet been determined.

Schedule

Please see attached sheet.

Additional Information

- Project Web link: <http://seattle.gov/parks/Athletics/golferse.htm>
- Susanne K. Friedman, 800 Maynard Ave S, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98134, 206.684.0902, susanne.friedman@seattle.gov

References:

- City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Municipal Golf Renovation Master Plans, April 1991, prepared by John Steidel, Golf Course Architect

- Business and Strategic Plan, City of Seattle Municipal Golf Course System, July 2005, Economics Research Associates
- Resolution 30926, Golf Financial Policies